



Tempe Public Art



**Karla Elling,
Alberto Ríos, and
Harry Reese**

Words Over Water, 2001

Granite tiles

Location: Tempe Town Lake
Within the seat wall along the Lake

Photo: Craig Smith

Description: The artists' words and images are carved into more than 600 granite tiles installed in the seat wall around the Town Lake, creating a "book" that is six miles long. The artists collaborated to bring words to public art for a project that would create a sense of history and community. They collected memories and stories to inspire this artwork that could reach out to anyone who visited the lake. Images of birds, caliche and fish are combined with greguerías, a form of writing that mixes metaphor and humor to create new insight.

Artist biography: Karla Elling is a graphics artist and letterpress printer - the proprietor of Mummy Mountain Press and Papermill - who specializes in the literary arts. Her typography appears in public spaces such as the wall of the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, as well as in portfolio editions from *Hand Papermaking* magazine, the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and the University of Wisconsin *Silver Buckle Press*. Elling is coordinator of the Arizona State University Creative Writing Program.

Alberto Ríos, Arizona's Inaugural Poet Laureate, is the author of nine books and chapbooks of poetry, three collections of short stories and a memoir. His poems include *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body*, *Teodoro Luna's Two Kisses*, *The Lime Orchard Woman*, *The Warrington Poems*, *Five Indiscretions*, and *Whispering to Fool the Wind*. His collections of stories include *The Curtain of Trees*, *Pig Cookies*, and *The Iguana Killer*. He is a Regents' Professor of English at Arizona State University.

Harry Reese, Chair of the Department of Art Studio at the University of California Santa Barbara from 1996 to 2000, began the UCSB Book Arts program in 1978. His work is archived at the Getty Research Institute and has been exhibited internationally in Germany, Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia. His public art projects include works at the Los Angeles Central Library, the Penland School of Crafts, and in the city of Pasadena, California.

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